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# THE ELECTORAL CRISIS,

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## AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED IN THE

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

GETTYSBURG, PA.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1864

BY JAMES S. WOODBURN,

PASTOR OF SAID CHURCH.

"I would rather be right than be President."—HENRY CLAY



GETTYSBURG:

H. C. NEINSTEDT, PRINTER, FRANKLIN STREET,  
NEAR CORNER OF WEST

1864.

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GETTYSBURG, Oct. 26th 1864.

To Mr. J. H. White, Secretary for a meeting of the Gettysburg U. P. Congregation, held Oct. 25th, 1864.

DEAR SIR: I own to a feeling of unfeigned surprise last evening upon receiving the information of a resolution, that I "be requested to give to the Congregation a copy of my address, delivered this morning, with a view to its publication for their use and instruction." At first I felt disposed mirthfully to express myself satisfied with the received compliment, and straightway to decline the doubtful honor of, in this way, and at this time, coming before the public. But upon further reflection, I have felt differently inclined. Although the campaign in reference to which it was prepared and in the very heat of which it has been delivered, may, and perhaps shall, be concluded before the address sees the light, I cannot but flatter myself, that if the views therein set forth are worthy of the peoples' consideration at any time, they will be almost as deserving of their consideration after the election. While, as it may well be hoped, they may then be read and pondered with a more calm, unprejudiced and prayerful state of mind. And besides, amidst all its allusions to *campaign* questions and characters, every line of the address will show that it was never intended as an electioneering document. The sole object for which it was prepared and delivered, was to remove or appease certain grievances, real or imaginary, which were supposed to have been conceived with reference to the way in which it is generally known, I am determined to exert the power of my suffrage in this fearfully important political crisis. These aggrievances, I am glad to be informed, if they ever had an existence beyond the dis-tempered imaginations of outsiders, on yesterday, and as a result of a congregational conference, held over this single and imperfect exhibit I have ever made of my views upon the present condition and future prospects of our country, were most happily appeased.

I have likewise thought that a simple compliance with your request might go very far towards removing, or at least qualifying the impressions which I am told others have conceived as to my views and sympathies touching our common nation's sore life-and-death struggle. However humble, every one who really is, cannot but be desirous to be esteemed a patriot, even though he may not be willing to pay an unqualified deference to that *clamorous*, and, I am constrained to feel, *un-christian* spirit of Unionism which would almost compel a man to carry the "colors," as a bosom ornament constantly about with him. Praying that God could give to all our citizens a better understanding of the great questions that relate to us as a nation, and a more Christian forbearance with one another, when they are led conscientiously to differ about the best practical way of dealing with these questions, I hereby engage myself, as soon as I shall be able to re-write it, (for I have as yet, only in a set of brief-long-hand characters untelligible to every one but myself,) to hand my address to you that it may be at the pleasurable disposal of the congregation.

I am, dear Sir,

Your humble but affectionate Pastor,

J. S. WOODBURN

GETTYSBURG, Nov. 7th, 1864.

MR. J. H. WHITE,

DEAR SIR: I submit to you herewith the promised manuscript. I regret to learn, that arrangements for its early publication have been found to be impracticable. The circumstances forestalling these arrangements have incidentally been reported to me to-day, and I may say, have increased greatly the regret, I was made to feel keenly enough before,—that I have not been able ere this to let the manuscript go from my hands.

To what appears in my letter of October 26th, I must add this, in correction of an erroneous impression that has gone abroad, that the delivery of this address was *voluntary with myself*. With perhaps one or two exceptions, there was not one in my congregation, who had any knowledge whatever of the intention I was cherishing until an announcement of its forthcoming was made some ten days previous to its delivery. My only regret now is that circumstances over which I had no control, prevented me from sooner carrying out my intention, and that at the last I have been able only thus imperfectly to carry it out. For I will not conceal the fact that the address, as lately delivered, and as here preserved, is in the main not precisely what I had wished it to be. Could I have hoped that the privilege would not have been questioned by some one, or ones to the far greater detriment of myself and the cause I represent, I should have liked, in view of the request with which the congregation have flattered me, to have exerted myself to make the embodiment a truer exhibition of the idea,—by suppressing that is, much that is purely political, and introducing greatly more that is properly theological or prophetic.

J. S. W.



## SERMON.

MY FELLOW CITIZENS:—

For so shall I address you this morning, and for the reason that while I am speaking from the altar of my sacred ministrations, I could wish to be regarded *for once*, not in the high character of the minister of God, but in that simply of an American citizen,—it is scarcely possible to over-estimate the importance of the campaign through which we are now passing. It is, in my humble view, most unlike any of those through which we have already passed—campaigns which have proved to be but the mere quadrennial epochs of our national life. This bids fair to become the very crisis of our history—the turning point, for weal or for woe, of our national existence. Never were there issues so vast—never were there responsibilities so grave devolved upon any people as are those that are devolved upon our people to-day. It would be impossible for me here, as well as foreign to the object I have in view upon the present occasion, to attempt even the briefest recital of the things which combine to give the most unprecedented character and weight to the impending presidential election. But widely different as may be, and, no doubt, are the views that you severally entertain of the relative importance of these things; you will all agree with me that never has there been such a time, and that, in all probability, never shall there be such another a time as this,—a time involving so momentous an issue—a time incurring so frightful a risk. If I could only be raised above the fear that it is to be the end, I might be induced to believe that it may prove but the beginning of times to our land.

Such a time as the present is, therefore, not time to be indifferent. If it were, I should certainly hail with joy the happy privilege. Believe me—I feel that the arena of our national politics is too deeply disturbed and too wildly agitated to admit of the minister of the Gospel of peace, letting himself down to it even for a moment without the weightiest of reasons. But it is no time to show ourselves to be indifferent. On the contrary, it is a time calling loudly upon us

to feel and to *manifest* our deepest concerns. Even to *appear* to be neutral now, would be to exhibit a character both disloyal and detestable. It is, as I solemnly feel and would as solemnly proclaim, incumbent upon all our citizens to act, and to act as in the fear of God, and out of the deepest concern for the welfare of the land. But especially do I feel and would I proclaim, that it is incumbent upon the Christian portion of our citizens to act and to make their influence be felt in the present fearful crisis. The moral obligation is not, indeed, greater essentially in their case than in others. But for the very reason that others will not meet this obligation as they ought, it is made to devolve upon them with, as it were, an accidental force also. God's people are the salt of the earth. By their conserving influence they hold society together and prevent it from becoming one unmingled mass of putrid rottenness. If, therefore, the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall the earth be salted? When, if ever, the time shall come when the people of God shall entirely lose their stillness, the earth shall thenceforth be good for nothing but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

I repeat God's people *must* act and fulfil their varied relations and duties in society. They are under the most bounden obligation so to do. And yet they must not act as do others. They must not run with the multitude to do evil. "The voice of the people" is *not* to be to them, "the voice of God." Nor are they at any time to ally themselves to, or in any way fraternize with any of the political organizations that may be found within the State. They are under the most solemn obligations to keep themselves free from every such entanglement. At a time like this, and indeed in every campaign like this, they must of necessity act with one or other of the two or more political factions; for observations as well as history, shows that the only practicable issue presented to the State is always in more or less intimate connection with these organizations, unholy and unwarrantable as they are. But while they are acting with them, and while for the time being, they are really of one or other of them, they must be careful to preserve themselves distinct from them. Though in them betimes, they are never to be of them. They are ever to bear in the most solemn remembrance that these political factions, like the very forms of society themselves from which they spring, are without the least divine warrant—that they exist only by divine sufferance.—that sooner or later they are to be deluged with an overflow

ing flood of Divine wrath, that shall sweep them, together with all such as are wholly given up to them, into the abyssal gulf of perdition, and that unless they do come out from them and preserve themselves separate from them, they can never hope to deliver themselves entirely from the plagues with which they shall be visited.

This, then, as I humbly conceive, is the position which the Christian as the denizen of this world is to maintain with respect to earthly governments and the worldly societies, or factions, in them. Alas! my Christian brethren, that we should be living so far below this position. There is not, I dare say, one of all of us who professes to be, not conformed to this world, but transformed from it, that is keeping himself as free from the party politics, and the political associations of the times as he should. This is, indeed, as I am ever prepared to avow the position which I am striving to attain and to maintain. But I frankly confess that while I have felt it easy in feeling to attain this position, I have found, and am yet finding it one of the most difficult things in the world in life to maintain it. The flattering cajolleries of the one party, and the railing accusation of the other party, together with the wilful or ignorant misrepresentations of the members of both are continually working upon me, both to entice and provoke me to become one of the most confirmed politicians of the day. But I am resolved, by the help of God's grace, to allow neither the coquetry of the one party, nor the affected disdain of the other, to move me one hairsbreadth from that high, that independent position which I am so fully convinced it most becomes me, both as a Christian and as a minister, to maintain.

And now having given you this much with regard to the true position of Christians in general, and of my own in particular, permit me to express the hope that you are in some degree prepared patiently to hear and impartially to weigh an humble statement and a brief discussion of the somewhat indefinite views to which I am adhering during the incumbent political campaign. The peculiar, indirect manner in which this statement is made, has been adopted for the reason that it was judged most conducive to the end in view—of giving to you a sort of manifesto of the position together with some of the reasons inducing it, which I am led solemnly, and as in the fear of God, to take up the momentous questions submitted for the decision of the American people to-day.

We shall not stop to enquire what are all the things that combine to give the most unprecedented character and weight to the present presidential campaign. It will, behoove us however, to inquire after the chief of these things. For while there are many things involved in our canvass, they are by no means of equal weight and importance.

What is the great, the cardinal issue to be made up—what is the great, the crowning responsibility to be met, by our people at the approaching November election? I ask this question in no petty partisan spirit. I ask it with the deepest solicitude to know and to state the truth. I believe our people should have this question asked of them and, if need be, answered for them; and in this belief I am bold to say, that the first, the permanent duty of all our journals is to state, and to the very best of their ability, candidly to answer this question. And yet, I must here charge upon all them a disposition to overlook, if not entirely to ignore this imperious duty. I speak not now of any particular journal, or of the journals of any particular faction. They all, from the largest double-sheeted city daily that circulates by its hundreds and even thousands to the little petty village weekly, that circulates only by its tens and twenties, fall alike under the stroke of this condemnation. In all the journals I have seen from time to time—and I always make it a point to glance at least at every one with which I meet.—I have never found this question so much as touched upon in a manner that should for a single moment shield the editorial chair from the charge, either of being entirely ignorant of the commanding position to which it is justly entitled, or else of being criminally disposed to suppress it from the view and attention of the people. Oh! if our democratic journals would only stop to consider what a hold they might have upon the intelligence and affection of our people by a calm, dispassionate and patriotic statement and discussion of the great, over-topping question of this campaign, and if, in one united and harmonious effort to conduct and further this discussion, they were to cease their low and scurrilous abuse of men and officers in power, they might, methinks, do much to vindicate themselves against the charge of disloyalty, or that of any other opprobrious epithet, under which, as a great political incubus, they are so generally lying, and by the very reason of which so many of them have become powerless for the least good.



Before advancing to a statement of the great paramount question now presented to the American people for decision, suffer me to give utterance to that upon which, as a groundwork or basis, this stupendous issue sets itself. This is, *the practical dismemberment of the old United States, and the consequent unavoidable necessity of seeking anew for their reconstruction.* Be not alarmed, my hearers. I am not, as you may fear, or rather, as you might easily persuade yourselves to believe, either a disunionist or a secession sympathizer. I repudiate as strongly as any living man can, the rebel-projected doctrine of State secession. I avow as firmly as any living man can, the authority of the Federal government to coerce a revolting State to the obedience of the federal constitution and laws. I am now, however, speaking of what, in fact, is, and not of what in theory, is, and therefore in fact ought to be. I repeat, *the old United States are now practically disintegrated.* I do not mean, let me say still further in defence of my position, that the South has established its independence upon the ground of a revolution. Nor do I mean to express my opinion as to whether we should now, or at any time, sue first for an armistice of hostilities and then for a friendly, conventional negotiation, looking to a peaceful reconstruction of the States. But I do mean to say is that as we stand to-day, we are no longer one people, that we are at least two peoples, and that go on fighting as long as we will and reach the end of our military achievements as soon as we will, yet as the most incontestable proof that we are now disunited now, the time will come when, (if indeed we desire the re-establishment and prosperity of our *republican* institutions,) we shall be compelled to come to friendly negotiations looking to the peaceful reconstruction of the Federal Union. And here I am by no means unwilling to accord the credit of the deepest practical philosophy to the charge which we war advocates sometimes hear from the lips of the advocates of peace: "You cannot conquer a peace." No, my fellow-citizens we cannot conquer a *republican* peace. A republican rebellion we may and I trust we very soon shall conquer. But a republican peace—a peace like to that in the bonds of which we lived and prospered for over seventy years—the *very* peace for which we are now draining the land of the blood of many of our best young men,—we shall never be able to *conquer*: and therefore I hesitate not to say, it would be the best of our policy never

to attempt *this* which can spring alone from the spontaneous assent and consent of the people. To return. The sum of what I mean to say about the present practical condition of our country is simply this, that the old union of '76 and again of '87 is really *temporally* destroyed—that, if indeed we be able indefinitely to maintain our status as a government, the time *must* come, and the more speedy and overwhelming are our victories, the sooner it *will* come when in effect, the question will have to be submitted to the people of the South. Will you, or will you not return to a union with the people of the North?

Did I say, my fellow-citizens, that in the progressive march of our armies the point will eventually be reached when the South shall have to be invited to return to a union with the North? How fondly do we all anticipate this time! How very near to our realizations do our anticipations oftentimes bring it! And yet, alas! I fear this time is much farther off than most of us are given to imagine.

But on the supposition that this fondly anticipated time is coming, what shall that particular union be in the bonds of which the South is to be invited to return to the North? This is not a question for me to answer. This is a question—this is *the* question for you to answer, O American Citizens. This, *this*, I repeat, is the paramount question you are called to put to rest at the coming presidential election. In what kind of a union shall the people of the South be invited to return to us? Shall they be invited to return in the bonds of a union in every respect like the old? Or, shall they be asked to come back in the bonds of a much higher-toned union, a union, which, if once formed, might afford the promise of a longer and happier continuance? This, this, I repeat yet again, is the great paramount question to be settled in the impending election. This it is that forms the chief plank, not indeed of the platforms upon which the two opposing candidates have been nominated, but of the platforms to which they have both voluntarily advanced themselves and by which they have in effect, declared themselves willing to stand or to fall. This is therefore, the question that should give character and form to the whole of the incumbent campaign. Whether our politicians and journals will permit us to say it or not, this question involves almost the entire weight of the responsibility that has been devolved upon our people in this fearfully important crisis; and so

very weighty and important is it that in comparison with it every other is made to sink into utter insignificance.

And here just permit me to say, what both parties, (if they would respect themselves as they should respect each other,) would admit, that the credit of union or the discredit of disunion, attaches particularly to neither party in this campaign. If we may take the utterances of the honored and (I will add) the honorable candidates as the materials from which to form our judgment, certainly the discredit of disunion belongs to neither of them. If we may take these same utterances as the material from which to form our judgment again—and to the unbiassed citizen such utterances are worth more than ten thousand planks in ten times ten thousands platforms—they are both union, yet neither of them so characteristically so as wholly to rob the other of being so also.\* These men call themselves or rather permit themselves to be called the nominees of the Democratic and Republican parties respectively. If we ply our ears to the oracle of but one of these parties we shall find that they bear the euphonic cognomens of *Copperhead* and *Union*. But we will defer to no oracle, however pretentious. In my humble view, neither of these parties can be appropriately designated by either of these names. Appropriate epithets with which to designate them both, would not be hard to find. The *Constitutional* and the *Reform* would as I think, most truthfully represent them as they now offer themselves in the person of their competing candidates for the suffrages of the American people. And if there is any one thing above every other I could wish to have seen in this highly exciting campaign, it is this—all the party bannering and party electioneering being done under cover of its appropriate party nomenclature.

Now if these parties, which as I conceive, would be much more becomingly styled the Reform and Constitutional, Mr. Lincoln is the regular nominee of the one, and Mr. McClellan of the other. Both these men have unstained moral escentheons. Seldom, if ever, in the history of the land, have the names of two such honorable individuals been submitted to the choice of our people. That whichever of them is elevated to the office of chief magistracy, will do whatever in him lies to carry out his avowed policy, I have not the slightest doubt.

\*If indeed the word is intended to be used in its historic associations, the Democratic, *not* the Republican, is justly entitled to the surname of *Union*.

We shall then, as I think we are warranted to do, look upon the voluntary utterances of these men as indicating as nearly as anything can, the distinct political policies that are presented to the choice of our people to-day. And with these opposing utterances in view, I say, with an assurance as unfaltering as it is deep, the great, the paramount question to be put to rest at the approaching election is this:—What is the particular kind of union in the bonds of which we shall invite the seceded States to return? Though they may not see it—though, as I fear, they do not, generally, see it, yet face to face with this question our people are now brought. As the direct result of the rise of what has been called the peace party, and whether prematurely or not, the responsibility of determining this result *at once* has been devolved upon the people of the North. From the settlement of this important question, therefore, we cannot, we dare not decline.

To prove that this question is really in this canvass as well as to confirm my assertion that it involves the very burden of its responsibility, I need here only quote the authority of one whom I am persuaded we are all willing in 1864 to regard as a very dangerous ultraist—Mr. Fremont. I doubt whether this man ever uttered a more ingenuous truth in his life, than when in his letter declining the nomination tendered him from the city of Cleveland, he declared that the position before the American people of the two chief rival candidates was this—Mr. Lincoln stands pledged to reconstruct our States only upon the basis of universal and everlasting freedom; while Mr. McClellan stands pledged to a willingness to reconstruct them upon the basis of the constitution which recognizes the existence and right of slavery. In uttering this, Mr. Fremont struck the very key note of this whole campaign, and would to God that all our politicians and journalists had but been pleased to take up the note thus furnished them by one who, so far as respects sympathy with the *persons* of the candidates, is certainly a disinterested man.\*

\*That Mr. McClellan is pledged to a *willingness* to reconstruct the States upon the basis of the old union, there can not be the shadow of a doubt. "The union," says he expressly, "is the one condition of peace—we ask no more." That Mr. Lincoln on the contrary is pledged to an *effort* to reconstruct the States upon a new basis, a basis of absolute and perpetual freedom, there can be no more surely than the merest shadow of a doubt. His manifesto is as follows:



What now, we proceed to inquire, are the respective merits of the two distinct political policies submitted to the choice of our people? And here just allow me to say that in using hereafter the names of Mr. Lincoln and Mr. McClellan, I have none but the most indirect allusion to them—the one as the acting President of the United States, and the other as the old, admired, but now relieved and affectedly disdained Commander of our armies. I use these names only to designate these men as the exalted heads of two great political factions, or more properly still, as the voluntary projectors of two separate national policies.

“EXECUTIVE MANSION, WASHINGTON, July 18, 1864.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Any proposition which embraces the restoration of peace, the integrity of the whole union, *and the abandonment of slavery*, and which comes by and with authority that can control the armies now at war with the United States will be met by liberal terms on other substantial and collateral points, and the bearer or bearers thereof shall have safe conduct both ways.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.”

Well has Mr. Curtis, a Democratic orator, said with reference to this —“I think if I were to read that paper to a jury of twelve intelligent men, who knew the subject to which it relates and were to ask them to infer from it that Mr. Lincoln did not mean to make the abandonment of slavery one of *these conditions* on which he is willing to have a restoration of the union, I should provoke a very significant smile. As plainly as the English can speak, he couples together the restoration of peace ‘the integrity of the whole union,’ and ‘the abandonment of slavery,’ as the three things which must be presented to him in one proposition by the power that now controls the southern armies. A proposition, he says, embracing these three things will be met by the executive government of the United States—*how?* By liberal terms on these points! Not at all! They shall be met by liberal terms on *other* substantial and collateral points.” The language is carefully framed to exclude the idea that there can be any more liberality about the abandonment of slavery than about the restoration of peace, and the integrity of the Union. The one is as much a fixed purpose with Mr. Lincoln as the two others. He knows that both sections of the country have so understood him, and to this day he has never uttered a word to correct (remove) that impression. We are bound to believe, that he does not wish to correct it.” Thus “the issue is made up between him and the Democratic party, on this point. If he changes that issue, he comes over to us,” continues the Democratic speaker, “so far as this matter is concerned.”

There can be no mistake, then, about the platform of either of the candidates. “We ask,” says General McClellan, “nothing but Union.” “We,” says Mr. Lincoln, “demand with the Union, the abolition of slavery.” “You of the South,” says the one, “can come into the Union as you were before you left.” “You can come into the Union,” says the other, “but you must abandon slavery *before your proposition to return can be considered.*”

First, the policy of Mr. McClellan most naturally claims our attention, though it will require no extended separate discussion. What this policy is, the veriest child might tell us. It is a policy that involves the sovereignty of the federal authority, together with the greatest possible subordinated states-rightism. It is, in short, the old union with all its advantages and with all its disadvantages, with all its blessings and with all its curses. It might not be and doubtless would not be practicable to restore this in all its entirety. Nevertheless Mr. McClellan is pledged to a willingness to re-establish this union, should he be chosen President, as nearly as may be. As it might and perhaps even could, in the event of the election of Mr. McClellan, be re-established this union would be simply this—the recognition of the old federal authority in every part of the land, together with a renewed guarantee to the several States of the South of their political or constitutional right to all the property, personal, relative and real, which by virtue of the old bond of the social compact, they may have in their possession at the time they shall submit to this authority. That Mr. McClellan would, if elected, as is sometimes charged upon him, lend his utmost efforts to effect the rendition of the emancipated slaves and the restoration of all the confiscated lands of the South, is simply too preposterous to be thought of; nor do I believe that any man who is at all acquainted with his character and antecedents can honestly suppose him capable of such an atrocity upon an outraged and degraded humanity. Mr. McClellan. (let me say but this much in the praise of one for whom I have long entertained the highest regard both as a *soldier* and as a *man*,) by his past history has shown himself to be *not* the man to restore to any State what has been lost to it by its own sheer default.\*

\*To my knowledge Mr. McClellan is the only man who has ever suggested any feasible and humane method of getting rid of slavery in the States over which the authority of the constitution has not been, for any considerable time, resisted successfully. See his plain and apparently dictatorial, but evidently sincere letter to Mr. Lincoln from Harrison's Landing. In one of the concluding paragraphs of his detailed army report, Mr. McClellan has invited attention, among other similar communications, to this very letter, and declared, "I have seen no reason to change in any material regard the views there expressed." If anything *can*, surely this *must* amply apologise for the declaration of some of his most ardent friends, that, farther than is absolutely required of him by a felt inviolable constitutional statute, Mr. McClellan is *not* a Southern man.

Next, and especially, as being a newly projected and untried thing, the policy of Mr. Lincoln demands our most earnest and serious attention. And what is this policy which avowedly presents itself as something "new under the sun?" It is simply the reconstruction of our disintegrated States upon the basis of absolute and perpetual freedom. Glorious project! Most delightful object! Enough to give to the man who shall be instrumental in affecting it an immortality greater than of Washington! O, my brethren would to Almighty God that our people from the chilly promontories of the North to the balmy harbors of the South, and from the farthest shore of the Atlantic to the waveless deep of the Pacific, were all prepared for just such a union! And would that they could be induced to throw themselves forward in the legally prescribed, or constitutional way for the attainment of such a blessed result!

But is such a union *practicable* in the present state of society in our land? Is it even *possible*? In other words, are our people ready for a reuniting of themselves in such a bond as this? I need not say they are not. We need not here pass judgment upon our brethren of the South. The very North is far from being ready for such a result. There are, at this late day, throughout the North (I speak it with shame and undisguised holy indignation) thousands upon thousands of men, men who inhale our free air in all its purity, men upon whom are dropping continually the very fatness of our free institutions, that are as much set upon the perpetual enslavement and degradation of the poor negro, as are any who are to be found south of the latitude of Mason and Dixon's line.

I take it for granted, then, that the people of neither section of the land are prepared for a union of our States upon the plan proposed by Mr. Lincoln. And I am ready to concede that this simple fact, when duly considered, is amply sufficient to constitute, in part, the apology of any man for utterly repudiating, *just now*, such a Utopian policy.

But it *may* be interposed here that this of itself is not a valid objection to the adoption of Mr. Lincoln's policy, of political reform. Nay, it doubtless *will* be urged here that if we would lend ourselves to the noble work of reforming the political character of our institutions, we must not wait until the people are prepared for the change—that we must, as men blind-folded, as it were, throw ourselves at once into

the effort and look upon the preparation of the people as a part of the very work to be accomplished.

This looks plausible. But I am seriously disposed to question the philosophy upon which it is based. *Political* reformation *ought* to be preceded by a good degree of *popular* reformation. I advance a step further. Every attempt to reform the political character of society *must* be preceded by *such an amount* of popular reformation as shall *strongly warrant the hope* of its being successful; otherwise failing to accomplish the end aimed at, it must prove worse than a failure, it will become ruinous. "If the foundation be destroyed what can the righteous do?" If the pillars that bear up the very frame work of society, however weak their nature and awry their position, be removed, what can Samson, the strongest man, do? Though he need not dread the final doom he must inevitably incur the temporal fate of his enemies the Philistines.

The matter, then, narrows itself down to this.—As the leader of the confessedly great and powerful party, whose ticket he heads to-day, can Mr. Lincoln enjoy the hope of being able to raze, as it were, the *whole fabric*, and digging down lay more deeply and more securely than ever, the *very foundations* of society? Many of you, I have no doubt, are ready to say that he can. I am aware there has long been a hue and cry abroad in the land that the sentiments of the American people both North and South are undergoing a rapid and most healthful change upon the question that confessedly, in one way or the other, lies at the root of all our present political troubles. However, I must avow that, so far, I have felt myself to be as deaf as an adder to this cry. How this pretended change is going on among the people of the South, I cannot, indeed say. I trust, very well. But as to how it is progressing among the people of the North, I am compelled to say that it seems to me to be directly *backwards*. Why, is not Mr. Lincoln, at the head of the party which, four years ago, showed itself to be almost omnipotent, confronted to-day by a party which to say the least is able to threaten his continuance in office? Steadily has this party been swelling its ranks ever since the announcement of his famous emancipation proclamation, and now it stands forth ready, as it would almost seem to overwhelm him upon the very issues which that otherwise harmless fulmenation has brought to the light.



I have never doubted the constitutionality, or rather, the military authority of that document. But I have always doubted, and I to-day, more than ever doubt the expediency of such a measure. I am aware that thousands of others, whose opinions at the time seemed immeasurably more trustworthy thought different. I have in mind just now a very distinguished citizen, a leading minister in our church, who upon the announcement of the issue of such a paper, confidently predicted an uninterrupted series of successes to our arms, the entire overthrow of the rebellion and the re-establishment of the union upon a much more equitable and enduring basis, *in less than six months*. To his mind, we had been brought to grapple with the rebellion in a wrong way, but to forego this error and even rectify our federal position with God, nothing more was needed than simply the declaration of such a determination upon the part of our Chief Magistrate. Subsequent events, however, I cannot but think have singularly disproved the correctness of a view so much one-sided and so obviously superficial. Subsequent events, I cannot but also think, have done much to justify me to day in indulging in the conviction, that, had Mr. Lincoln but held back his proclamation, contented himself with bearing down upon the iniquitous system of Slavery in the only way by which he has ever been able in any effectual way to do, by the application of the confiscation act; and had he but prosecuted the war as he begun,—for the simple purpose of re-establishing the Union, there never could have been formed against him a party formidable enough even to threaten his discontinuance in office until he should have put the rebellion completely to rest, and with it, too, the turbulent question of Slavery, and in a way much more speedy and humane than he is likely to find now.

\*I believe Mr. Lincoln's proclamation is never sought to be justified on any other ground than that it is a military measure. And yet strange to say multitudes of intelligent men have exhibited the logical incongruity of supposing that by the very issuing of this document the shackles have been struck off from every slave limb in the seceded States, and that no earthly power whatever could assume the right to bind them on again or to reconstruct the union upon any basis that would leave them on a single slave; while the simple state of the matter, is,—that if the measure be simply a *military* measure, like every other edict of the kind, it must await the power of force to carry it into effect, and in so far as it shall not be executed, it must leave no room for a corresponding *civil* edict upon the abandonment by the government of military rule.

Do not gather from me here that I have any such idea as that Mr. Lincoln, as the result of the approaching election, is going to be pulled down from the highest chair of state in the land. I rather incline to the belief that he will not, nay, that he will triumph over his competitor by a pretty heavy electoral vote. But suppose he should triumph with the entire electoral vote! What then? you ask. He will still find himself confronted by an opposition powerful enough to thwart every effort he makes for affecting a reform—an opposition, which, as I most solemnly believe, will prove by far more dangerous to the country than if it were to overwhelm him at once, at the polls!

But not only is it a question with me as to whether Mr. Lincoln has the *ability* safely to meddle with the foundations of society just now; it is also and chiefly a question with me as to whether he has the *right* even to attempt such a thing in the *particular way* he proposes to do. Mr. Lincoln is more a creature of the constitution than you or I. *We*, indeed, have inherited an obligation to at least passively submit to this instrument of our fathers. But *he* is sworn actively to obey it. A most conscientious regard is, therefore, on the part of Mr. Lincoln in the discharge of his official functions, due to every part of the constitution.

Now what is the particular *status* that has been assigned to each and all of the States by the constitution? Without multiplying words, I may just say that, to every one of them there has been delegated the right, or privilege, to control as it pleases, all its own internal affairs, slavery not excepted. Pennsylvania has this right guaranteed to her to-day. She might hold an election to-morrow, and if her citizens wished she might legalize slavery the day after. South Carolina had the right guaranteed to her before the passage of her ordinance of secession, Mr. Lincoln himself being judge. And obviously, unless the very genius of the constitution shall meanwhile have been changed, she should have this right guaranteed to her again as soon as this ordinance is withdrawn. "But," says Mr. Lincoln, "she shall not have this guarantee. She has professedly left the union in the bonds of which she enjoyed this right. She occupies a stand to-day on which she has no rights whatever. Her liberties indeed are all summed up in one mighty comprehensive obligation to return to the union. But before she can be permitted to return to this or any other union with the States of the North, *namely*, before her very proposition to return can ever be con-

sidered, she must abolish slavery, or at least express her perfect willingness to have the very genius of this union, in one particular at least, and to her a very important one, *changed*."

But has Mr. Lincoln the right to assume any such position as this upon the question of a reconstruction of our States? The question may be said to be one of political casuistry simply. Has he in other words, the right to figure in the character of a Reformer, while he is either governing in the capacity of a President or warring in the capacity of a Commander-in-chief? If he has, then I for one can see nothing that can possibly secure our government from becoming, in due order of time, a strong, centralised military despotism, unless indeed, it be the characteristic moderation and magnanimity of the President himself. I dare say, however, no one will be bold enough to say that Mr. Lincoln has this right. Yet this very right Mr. Lincoln himself, with the immediate object, perhaps, of drawing in the radical wing of his own party has tacitly assumed.

Let no one mistake me here. I am *not* impleading the right of the South to hold slaves. I am far from this and could wish to be thought so. I am speaking, however, of *political* not *moral* rights. Those of you who have seen Timothy Titcomb's very entertaining "Lessons in Life," will remember that in one of his chapters, he starts out with the assertion, that women have a right to sing bass, but after constructing an overwhelming argument in proof of his assertion and removing a number of presumed formidable objections to it, he ends up with the candid avowal that he would not like much to hear any of his lady friends attempt so masculine a thing. Now my individual position upon the question of "slavery" is not entirely unlike Mr. Titcomb's upon that of "woman's rights." I concede to all our States, under the constitution and until the constitution has been constitutionally changed, the *political* right (or privilege) of slavery. At the same time I deny the moral right of any of them in their individual or State capacity, to hold slaves. Such a right, no State has or ever has had. The whole practice of the Southern States, in this matter, has been in the most direct contravention of the clearest dictates of moral equity. For the wrong they have committed, however, and for any wrong they may hereafter commit, under the legally sustained plea of constitutional independency, the general government, after it has cast its whole moral influence against it, can be held no more accountable, than for any of the horrible

barbarities committed under the plea of religious consecration by the inhabitants of India or China.

But to return, Mr. Lincoln, I am compelled to say, has assumed a right which appertains to him neither as the simple President of the United States, nor yet as the Commander-in-Chief of the armies thereof. "*Assumed* it," interposes an ever ready interlocutor. "What then?" Is he not to be justified even in assuming it? Can he not fall back upon the essential rectitude of the course itself, and do just as he proposes to do and as you yourself cannot but concede, it would be well if he might or even could do? "Such an appeal as this gives rise to what may properly be termed a casuistical question, partaking not alone of a moral but also of a historical character,—viz : How far is a republican ruler, king or president, under an honest plea of bettering the condition of society, justified in transcending the powers that have been expressly or impliedly delegated to him?

Upon the discussion of this question we cannot, of course, enter just now. Such a task would necessitate an examination of history too minute for your patience at this late stage. Those of you, however, who are at all acquainted with history, may well conjecture the conclusion to which such a course must inevitably conduct us. I know not of a single page of history that can in any way be brought in, in proof of the point that a republican ruler is ever justifiable, even with the best of motives, in transcending the flight of his constitutional powers. Perhaps the reformation of society, by a character such as that in question, has never been attempted in so truly a magnanimous spirit as it was by Oliver Cromwell; yet the history of England both during and after the reign of this great and good man, must be allowed to be conveying to Mr. Lincoln to-day an admonition the most significant and solemn. "The government," says McCauley, speaking of the time of his protectorate, "though in form a republic, was in truth a despotism, moderated only by the wisdom, the sober-mindedness and the magnanimity of the despot." And from the consequences which such a dangerous usurpation of power was about to entail, the English people, after his death, as every schoolboy knows, were soon glad to escape. "Be ye subject to the powers that be." There is, my fellow-citizens, a divine philosophy in these words. "The powers that be!" These, to us as republican citizens, are the powers of the particular incumbent administration. To Mr. Lincoln, however, as a republican Presi-



dent, these are the powers of the established constitution. Upon us all does the obligation to subjection devolve, but upon none of us so immediately and solemnly as upon our chief magistrate.

"Be ye subject to the powers that be." Caesar was upon the throne when these words were uttered. His usurpations of power were glaring and undeniable. One would have supposed that resistance to such a tyrant might safely have been counselled. But no. Be ye *subject*. And why? Because "the powers that be are ordained of God," and because "whosoever resists the power resists the ordinance of God," and "they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."

The injunction of the Apostle, taken in connection with all the considerations enforcing it, I believe to be this: "Be ye subject to the powers that be, for the powers that be are ordained of God." To rid yourselves or even society of incumbent evils, lay not hold of unwarrantable power. Resist not, in any disorderly way, the powers that be; for whosoever resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist—except in those extreme cases where the right of revolution is conceded and the enjoyment of it allowed—shall receive to themselves damnation. The evils of society are indeed many and great, and ever shall be under the reign of man. But of yourselves you cannot hope to rid either yourselves or society of these evils. Therefore, while you neither countenance nor add to these evils, endure them. Be ye subject—be ye patient under the powers even of unrestrained usurpation until the day of the Lord Jesus and the times of the restitution of all things. *Then* will your salvation be nearer than now when you only believe. *Then* shall the whole creation, which now is groaning and travailing together in pain, be delivered. For that deliverance patiently wait ye, and for this cogent reason among others—that it is infinitely more than you can hope of yourselves to effect, and consequently every attempt you may make for the premature achievement of it must prove not only abortive in itself but disastrous to you.

"Can it be," asks some one who perceives at length whither my remarks are tending with me—"can it be that you, a minister of the Gospel and withal of the United Presbyterian persuasion, are in favor of 'the union as it was'—*with slavery*." To such a one I would reply briefly but unequiv-

vocally, *I am*—if indeed it must be; that is, if God shall not be pleased to over-reach the lawful endeavors of our officers and our armies and unite us in a better union. With all its evils—and I would say nothing that may in any way be construed into an unjust palliation of any of them—"the union as it was," gave rise to and for more than two generations maintained one of the strongest and most beneficent governments of which the history of the world can boast. Nor am I by any means sure that this union, the best practicable at the time it was formed, would not be the very best practicable just now. It would be better than an unwarrantable prolongation of the war, even for a warrantable end. (You will understand from other passages what I mean by this; I have not time to guard myself as effectually as perhaps I should, against the carpings of the narrow-minded caviler.) It would be better than despotism, or anarchy, or enslavement to a foreign power—the only alternatives, besides "union as it was," that, as I solemnly fear, are left to our unhappy country to-day.

But must the union *be* just "as it was?" Though identical in theory, might it not be very different in fact? Where is the intelligently loyal and Christian man, who did not believe and rejoice to believe, that the death-knell of slavery was sounded almost four years ago in the first bombardment of Fort Sumpter? Nay, where is the man who until lately did not believe or at least feign to believe that were the South at any time to be received to the union "*as it was*" and were the gateways over Mason and Dixon's line to be thus opened up to admit the titular emigration of the North, slavery would not in all probability be found in many of the States four years hence? I grant indeed that the future of the races in our land is involved in impenetrable darkness. But I should be doing violence to some of the deepest convictions of my mind, if I did not here express my belief, that this future *might* be worked out much more humanely for all concerned than it now is likely to be worked out under the radical policy adopted at length by Mr. Lincoln.

By this time you will all have inferred that I am in favor of Mr. McClellan, as the truly conservative or constitutional candidate in this electoral crisis. Let me just say further, that I should be afraid to be for Mr. Lincoln. "And why so?" you will ask. "Not surely, because you like not the end he has in view?" No, no; but because I dread the con-

sequences of the means he seems ready to employ for the attainment of this end.

As I stand here from Sabbath to Sabbath, I feel myself to be committed to but one party and one theory, the party and the theory of those who proclaim *the simple pre-millennial advent and reign of the Lord Jesus Christ*. That this coming will be pre-millennial, I have not the least doubt. That the times are pregnant with the indications of this coming, I am also well enough impressed. And that Mr. Lincoln, by embracing so heartily and withal so in providently, the world-wide cry for *reform, reform*, is about to assist, in no immaterial degree, in preparing the way of the kings of the earth for this coming, I am by no means unassured.

"But," interposes one, "if the election of Mr. Lincoln would in your view, hasten the advent of that day for which you so fervently pray, why do you not vote for him?"

"It must needs be that offences come: but woe to him by whom they come." It must needs be, as I think, according to the secret counsels of God, that the troubles which are immediately to precede the advent of the Son of Man, come. Yet woe to him who does anything, designedly to bring them about.

I solemnly believe it to be the bounden duty of all who entertain the like precious faith with me to act with the conservative portion of both State and Church and thus to do what individually they can to postpone to the last, "the hour of temptation" which assuredly is coming, and that quickly, upon all the earth.

I have done. The times in which we live, my fellow-citizens, demand of us the greatest moderation, forbearance and prudence. If ever there was a time when the counsel of our blessed Lord was in place, it is now:—"In your patience possess ye your souls." In your patience as members of State, possess ye your souls. In your patience as members of the household of faith, possess ye your souls. *As Christians* be not angry at one another, and ready to bite and devour one another, as too many just now are, because, forsooth, you cannot see eye to eye as *citizens*. Above all seek to know and to follow after the things which make for the peace, not so much of the State as of the Church. Woe, woe, to the man who shall sacrilegiously tamper with the peace of Christ's house! Blessings, blessings, on the contrary, to the man who shall labor while he "prays for the peace of Jerusa-

lem!" He, and he only, shall be made a partaker in the promise with which the divine injunction is urged—"they shall prosper that love thee," O, Jerusalem.











